

CHILD LABOR IN BRAZIL: SOLUTIONS AT THE DOMESTIC AND MERCOSUL
LEVELS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is divided in two chapters. In the first, the author studies the problem of child labor in the Brazilian context. In the second, the author analyzes the problem of child labor at the regional level from the perspective of the MERCOSUL. In the first chapter, the author gives a brief history of child labor in Brazil, a description of the problem, the reasons for the use of children in the labor force and the legislation addressing child labor. There is a case study of child labor in the Brazilian footwear industry and the programs there are addressing child labor. The first part ends with suggestions for the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers, as well as to the society to decrease or eliminate the use of child labor.

In the second chapter, the author compares child labor standards under the NAFTA and the MERCOSUL, as well as compliance and enforcement mechanisms in both North American Agreement Labor Cooperation (or NAALC) and MERCOSUL Social and Labor Declaration. The author concludes that the NAALC and the MERCOSUL Declaration do not effectively set standards on child labor and that not all country members are complying with their own labor standards, since we continue to have child labor in Brazil and Mexico. The NAALC is more likely to be enforced even though its enforcement mechanism require different steps prior to imposing a sanction.

Then, the author analyzes the U.S.' introduction of a new law the "International Child Welfare Protection Act" which may work as an incentive

to other countries take measures to eliminate child labor. The author also analyzes two initiatives taken in MERCOSUL that may impact child labor. Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay participated in the Global March Against Child Labor. The adoption of a social security protocol by all the MERCOSUL members may have an impact on alleviating poverty, and therefore, decreasing child labor. The author concludes by suggesting two main measures which can be taken in the MERCOSUL level to improve the situation of child labor: implementation of the job creation provision and the empowerment of the Labor Committee.

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